



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Law and Order Committee receives report regarding the
Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act on the Navajo Nation**

WINDOW ROCK – The Law and Order Committee, on Monday, received a report from the Navajo Department of Public Safety regarding the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act that was implemented on the Navajo Nation in 2012.

SORNA is Title I of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 that aims to enforce minimum standards for sex offender registration while extending jurisdiction of the registrations across the 50 states, District of Columbia, principal U.S. territories, and federally recognized tribes.

“Currently, we require all sex offenders, Navajo and non-Navajo, that choose to live on the Navajo reservation to register with NDPS,” said NDPS police officer Pamela Hurley.

Hurley said that for the past one and a half years, the Navajo Nation has implemented its version of SORNA, which is the Navajo Nation Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act of 2012 to better serve the safety and protection of Navajo people, especially children.

LOC members expressed their support for the initiative and inquired as to why the Navajo Nation has yet to implement some of SORNA’s key principles.

“What is holding the Nation back from using all the latest technologies to register and maintain up-to-date data on sex offenders?” asked LOC member Council Delegate Duane Tsinigine (Bodaway/Gap, Coppermine, K’ai’bii’tó, LeChee, Tonalea/Red Lake).

In response, Hurley said the lack of implementation is due to the shortage of funding and resources of NDPS. She further explained that NDPS plans to seek additional funding from the Navajo Nation and future grants, adding that NDPS is in the process of drafting legislation to amend the NNSORNA to strengthen the law.

Important amendments in the proposed legislation would allow for the immediate apprehension of sex offenders that fail to register or abscond, require registration of all sex offenders that were convicted prior to 2006, extend all sex offender requirements to apply to all convicted sex

offenders regardless of where they were convicted, and more stringent penalties for sex offenders that fail to register.

LOC member Council Delegate Russell Begaye (Shiprock) said he is in support of the proposed amendments to the 2012 Act and offered to sponsor the legislation.

“I think it is important that we strengthen the NNSORNA of 2012 to protect our people and children, so I am in support of the proposed legislation for the added amendments,” said Delegate Begaye.

At the end of the discussion, Delegate Begaye suggested that the proposed legislation should also address non-Navajos to ensure that it applies to all sex offenders residing on the Navajo Nation.

LOC voted 3-0 to approve the report.

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